

Message Text

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SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION TO CANADIAN-AMERICAN COMMITTEE REPORT
ON CANADIAN-U.S. RELATIONS

REF: 76 OTTAWA 3060

1. THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN THE JULY 28 ISSUE
OF THE ALBERTAN:

QUOTE. IT IS AN AXIOM THAT THIS COUNTRY S RELATIONS
WITH THE UNITED STATES CANNOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED -
ESPECIALLY ON THE CANADIAN SIDE. THUS, ANYTHING
WHICH FOCUSES OUR ATTENTION ON THE RELATIONSHIP - AS
A REPORT JUST PUBLISHED BY THE CANADIAN-AMERICAN
COMMITTEE DOES - IS TO BE WELCOMED, IF ONLY AS A
REMINDER OF AN ONGOING NATIONAL PROBLEM WHICH REQUIRES
OUR CONSTANT ATTENTION.

THE CANADIAN-AMERICAN COMMITTEE - AN UNOFFICIAL BUT
PRESTIGIOUS BODY OF PROMINENT CITIZENS OF BOTH
COUNTRIES - HAS ALSO PERFORMED ANOTHER USEFUL
SERVICE. IT EMPHASIZES A POINT MADE WITH INCREASING
FREQUENCY DURING THE PAST YEAR OR SO BY OTHERS,
INCLUDING POLITICIANS AND DIPLOMATS - THAT THE
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NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP IS CHANGING.

THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT IT HAS BECOME MORE DIFFICULT, IN HISTORICAL TERMS. THE COMMITTEE S DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CANADIAN-U.S. RELATIONS AS "TENSE" IS AN EXAGGERATION. GRANTED, THERE IS A SIZABLE LIST OF IRRITATING ISSUES AT THE MOMENT, BUT IRRITANTS DON T PRODUCE TENSION AND THERE IS NO REASON TO ASSUME THAT DELIBERATE ESCALATION OR CLUMSINESS ON EITHER SIDE WILL INVITE A SERIOUS CONFRONTATION.

IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, IT WAS MOST OFTEN THE U.S. WHICH IRRITATED CANADA. NOW, IT IS THE OTHER WAY AROUND. THAT IS THE NEW ELEMENT IN THE RELATIONSHIP, AND IT INVOLVES MORE THAN A SIMPLE REVERSAL OF ROLES. THE U.S. WAS PRONE TO ANNOY US THROUGH SHEER THOUGHTLESSNESS, BECAUSE OF FAILURE TO APPRECIATE THAT SOME AMERICAN ACTION WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THIS COUNTRY. WE, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE WELL AWARE THAT MEASURES WE ADOPT TO INCREASE OUR ECONOMIC OF CULTURAL INDEPENDENCE ARE BOUND TO AFFECT SOME U.S. INTERESTS ADVERSELY - AND, BECAUSE THE AMERICANS KNOW THAT WE KNOW THIS, THERE IS A DANGER THAT THEY WILL MISINTERPRET OUR INTENTIONS.

SIMPLICITLY, AT LEAST, THE CANADIAN-AMERICAN COMMITTEE S REPORT IS A WARNING OF THIS DANGER. IT IS A TIMELY WARNING EVEN THOUGH CANADIANS MAY FEEL THAT IT IS COUCHED IN TERMS WHICH UNDULY EMPHASIZE AMERICAN CONCERNS.

WE SHOULD NOT FEEL OBLIGED TO LET AMERICAN SENSITIVITIES DETER US FROM COURSES WHICH ARE OTHERWISE IN OUR LEGITIMATE NATIONAL INTEREST. BUT WE DARE NOT IGNORE THOSE SENSITIVITIES. WE WOULD BE WISE TO MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN SHORT-TERM POLITICAL OBJECTIVES AND LONG-TERM ECONOMIC AND DIPLOMATIC ONES, AS THE COMMITTEE SUGGESTS. WE WOULD ALSO DO WELL TO TAKE THE ADVICE RECENTLY OFFERED BY OUR SENATE S FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE THAT WE TRY HARDER TO EXPLAIN OUR ASPIRATIONS TO THE AMERICANS. UNQUOTE.

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WM CONSUL GENERAL HAS BEEN INVITED TO ATTEND OCTOBER 1-2 SESSION OF CANADIAN-AMERICAN COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN CALGARY.
HALL

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